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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION NEW AMBASSADOR IN ARGENTINA,
GUANTANAMO, HAITI; BUENOS AIRES 02/17/06

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Papers lead with the quick approval of Ambassador Wayne's 'agreement', underscoring that he's a good choice to iron out the differences following the Summit of the Americas, and that the move is another sign of both countries' interest in improving bilateral relations. The Guantanamo controversy and the proclamation of Preval as Haiti's President also garner media play.

12. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "U.S. Appoints New Ambassador"

Center-right, daily-of-record "La Nacion" says (02/17)
"In a clear political gesture, and in less than 24 hours, the GOA approved the credentials for Anthony Earl Wayne as future U.S. ambassador in Argentina.

"This adds to a list of goodwill signs that the Kirchner and Bush administrations exchanged during the past weeks with the purpose to heal the bruises left by the Summit of the Americas.

"Beyond the formality of the official communiqu, MFA officials clearly expressed their satisfaction with which the GOA received the appointment of Lino Gutierrez' successor.

"The present Assistant Under Secretary for Economic and Business Issues, 'Tony' Wayne... is a career diplomat, with expertise on relations with Europe and the fight against terrorism, with renowned prestige and academic background.

"'He's a man of substantial weight in the State Department, with experience in trade negotiations. His appointment is very important,' said a close collaborator of Foreign Minister Taiana.

"According to the GOA, Wayne's designation clearly shows that one of the priorities in the bilateral relationship will be the strengthening of commercial ties with Argentina.

".... Argentine Ambassador Bordon pointed out last night that Wayne 'knows the situation of Argentina very well' and was one of the officials who discussed the debt renegotiation, therefore we expect 'a constructive relationship'...."

- "The GOA Views the Appointment as a Step Forward"

Center-right, daily-of-record "La Nacion" says (02/17) "For the Kirchner administration, the appointment of Earl Anthony Wayne as new U.S. ambassador to Argentina is a step forward in the improvement of bilateral relations, which kicked off in January with the resumption of a fluid dialogue between officials of both countries... seriously damaged by the differences of the two governments at the Summit, when Kirchner and Bush disagreed on the FTAA.

".... The turning point in the process of ironing out differences was A/S Shannon's visit to Argentina in January.

".... 'With Wayne's designation, Washington wanted to send a signal aimed at strengthening the bilateral relationship with Argentina, which is very strong in the economic field,' said an official of Minister Taiana's entourage...."

- "Argentina: Quick Approval of New U.S. Ambassador"

Natasha Niebieskikwiat, center-left, leading "Clarín" diplomatic columnist, writes (02/17) ".... Argentina's quick approval clearly indicates it's pleased with the designation of Wayne who - due to his background as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Business and Economic Issues since 2000 - is expected to steer the bilateral relationship in the direction of economy and trade issues, according to diplomatic sources.

"However, the speed with which Argentina approved Wayne's designation is only part of a long and complex

process overshadowed by speculation and tens of versions, which reflected the huge political lobby behind the appointment of an ambassador.

".... In Buenos Aires they know that Wayne is A/S Shannon's man who, unlike his aggressive predecessors Reich and Noriega - is seeking dialogue instead, not cornering (the country.)

"'(Wayne) Is convenient for us,' said an Argentine official curtly. He's a career diplomat, deeply involved in economic and trade issues that interest the Kirchner administration.

".... The DCM for the Embassy in Argentina will be Michael Matera, a diplomat who already worked in Buenos Aires and is now chief of cabinet of Robert Zoellick, deputy of the powerful Condoleezza Rice."

- "A Wayne Who's not John, New U.S. Ambassador"

Fernando Cibeira, leftist "Pagina 12" diplomatic columnist, writes (02/17) ".... Wayne will arrive in Argentina with the mission to normalize the link between Washington and Buenos Aires, damaged after the Mar del Plata Summit. The MFA believes the designation is positive, because in their opinion Wayne is 'serious' and 'a good interlocutor.' Nevertheless, in diplomatic circles, some viewed this appointment as a step back in the White House's perception of Argentina, saying the appointed official -- who doesn't speak Spanish - allegedly lacks connections with President Bush's close circle, as present Ambassador Lino Gutierrez does. 'It's not true. He might not be a friend of the President, but he's important within the Bush administration,' according to the MFA.

- "Tough Crossfire Between UN, EU and the U.S. Over Guantanamo"

Business-financial, conservative "Ambito Financiero" says (02/17) "Following the impact sparked by the new photos of torture in Iraqi prisons, the EU Parliament and five UN rapporteurs demanded in a report that the U.S. shut down the Guantanamo prison 'immediately,' a request which the Bush administration toughly rejected, arguing that the prisoners are terrorists.

"While the document believes all the detainees must be taken to independent trial and that keeping them in the present status would be equal to 'arbitrary detention,' the U.S. said the experts' viewpoint 'doesn't reflect a direct and personal knowledge' of what's going on in the detention center, because they never visited it.

".... However, the five UN rapporteurs declined the U.S. invitation (to visit the prison in 2004) when in October last year they received a letter from the Bush administration inviting the experts but 'denying them the possibility of interviewing or holding private meetings' with the detainees.

".... This is why the report is based 'on USG information, interviews with former prisoners who are now living or detained in Spain, France or Great Britain, and on answers from lawyers' of those who are still in Guantanamo...."

- "'What the U.S. Posed Was Unacceptable'"

Leftist "Pagina 12" carries an interview with Argentine rapporteur at the UN, Leandro Despouy, who said (02/17) "'The fact that the UN report had such a tremendous repercussion in less than 24 hours indicates that it is veracious and compelling.'

".... "In June 2004, when the UN asked five experts to prepare the report, the U.S. invited only three people to visit Guantanamo. Given that the conditions were unacceptable, we rejected the invitation. It would have been a very ominous precedent for an expert to visit the installations and not be able to see the detainees...."

- "Haiti: The Best Result Possible"

Luis Bruschtein, leftist "Pagina 12" international columnist, opines (02/17) ".... Preval's victory in the elections by a broad margin was the best result to start fixing Haiti's imbroglio. Amid chaos and after a serious defeat, the popular sectors managed to generate a clear government option in the eyes of the people and, instead, Washington's candidates only obtained 10% of the ballots. This result makes it more difficult for any attempt of manipulation, coup or destabilizing threat to take place. The MINUSTAH forces managed to skip the embarrassment they could have faced and must respond to the president elect.

"The future is still more difficult because the economy is broke and the social situation is calamitous. The Latin American governments that took part in the MINUSTAH in solidarity should now show the same solidarity in rebuilding the country whose status is an insult to human dignity."

13. To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our classified website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>

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